

## CORRESPONDENCE

### A DAY WITH ROLLIER

Extracts of a Letter Written by Doctor Langley  
Porter to His Associate, Doctor Clain  
Gelston of San Francisco

I have just spent a day with Rollier at Leysin, writes Porter. It is the biggest and best-run personal medical enterprise I have ever seen. Thirty-two separate clinic buildings, more than one thousand patients. I thought I had seen some bone tuberculosis, but yesterday I saw four times as many patients suffering with Potts as in all my previous experience—high, low, and dorsal. Three hundred odd additional persons with hip, knee, sacro-iliac, hand, foot, jaw, and cranial tuberculosis—all doing well. Every face smiling except newcomers, all in a good sound state of nutrition and with extraordinary muscular development. The interesting thing is that there is no operating, and no plaster is used. Rollier showed me his abandoned operating and plaster rooms, all the more remarkable, since he began as a surgeon with a predilection for plaster, and now he rejects both because plaster and dressings cut light off the parts and because they cause atonicity and atrophy of muscles.

All repositions are made by posture and traction. Sun and food complete the cure.

Potts cases are kept on the face during the day; on the back at night, with mattress pads to protect the gibbus at first; later pressure pads aid reposition. I did not see a single pressure sore or any unhealthy skin. They use skin friction with alcohol. Knee cases are placed with mattress pad so that the knee is higher than the hip, with the thigh in external rotation; the joint only slightly lower than the knee to limit flexion to a very slight angle. Padded to retain position. Mattresses are of hair. Pads are used of increasing hardness: (1) Coarse millet seed; (2) fine millet seed; (3) sand or hard-packed hair.

The traction apparatuses are simple but effective. Weights over pulleys; very light frames to attach to the bed, easily clamped, easily removed. Two struck me as especially ingenious, one for high cervical and dorsal Potts. All the traction is made from the occiput. A celluloid fitted head piece is fastened to a little carriage running on metal rails. The occiput piece is retained by a band around the forehead, and the pull comes on the sliding carriage, which carries the head up as the weight pulls. It is pictured in Rollier's book. Rollier's finger traction splint also is good. It is an aluminum trough that fits the finger, but runs out to two and one-half times the length of the finger, getting progressively narrower, till at the end the two sides almost approximate and form the bearing for a little pulley (not too little) which carries a traction cord attached to an elastic or metal spring, which in turn is anchored to a wrist piece. It would be fine for sprains and fractures of the fingers, and baseball fingers.

The leg tractions also use the principle of the movable carriage on a light track which is made part of the splint. The management of two non-tubercular patients interested me. In one a spastic paralysis (Little's) traction on the legs in the position of abduction was employed *always at night*, which I think is a good idea.

A system of massage and training is in vogue such as we use, except without hot baths. They have a rather good scheme for training patients in walking. The carriage runs on three wheels, the foreward one hinged for steering. It can be pulled by a nurse while the child follows, or, if the child is able, it can do the steering itself. It might be useful after the child had learned to handle itself after practice on the parallel bar and foot-board combination, such as we use. Besides this, the usual sun treatment is used, and seems to help to gain some relaxation.

The other case was a usual lateral curvature in an adolescent. The whole treatment was day rest on the face, with exercises of the side toward the convexity (1)

by raising the head and shoulders, and (2) by pulling a weight with the hand of that side. The weight is hung quite a bit behind and to the side of the shoulder, and it seems to be working a transformation. Another good stunt is the use of laminaria tents to dilate sinuses that drain poorly. Rollier objects to any cutting that can be avoided. Just slips a small tent into the mouth of the sinus and leaves it twenty-four hours, when drainage becomes free.

As to the use of the sun, we have his principles fairly well in practice. He rarely uses more than three or four hours a day. He begins with small exposed areas with short exposures. Never permits visible reddening of the skin. When there is pain on thickening of the joints, he paints the skin over them with 10 per cent alcoholic solution of eosin, which he thinks permits the better penetration of violet and cuts off red, or vice versa (I shall have to look that up). It might be well to try eosin with the quartz lamp for painful joints, or inflammation in serous membranes. Rollier says that one must take the greatest care with dry peritonitis and with intra-abdominal inflammations, to give only minimal exposures of the tender abdomen to the sun.

I was surprised at the casual attitude toward food. He limits milk to 750 cc; limits meat to two or three meals a week, and uses skinless vegetables, butter, and fruit.

Rollier's clinic is as clean as a pin. I never saw such milky linen or so dustless an institution. He scoffs at those who say lungs cannot be treated by the sun, but, as in peritonitis, minimal exposure to the affected part is essential at first.

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Doctor J. A. Simpson, San Francisco, so enjoyed the following editorial clipping from the Paris (Missouri) Mercury that he sends it to us for "our amusement." We pass it on to you:

"The other day a stranger, with the best of intentions, walked into this office and, inquiring for the editor, who is of the elect that suffer from hay-fever, urged him in kindly, though somewhat detached and remote manner, to try Christian Science. At the same time he recommended a St. Louis 'practitioner,' who, for a stated price, could free us of the error that we had a nose and having bereft us of that necessary member, without which a smoke is never a smoke, send us home happy. As a rule, people with hay-fever cures excite the homicidal instinct in us instantly, but something in the man's appearance stayed the hand that would slay. He was small, thin, anemic, wore bi-focal glasses, had on arch-support shoes, and was struggling with a new set of false teeth. His eyes were red and his nose swollen. We thanked him, not altogether ungraciously, and as he stepped out into a beautiful September afternoon filled with millions of golden particles of ragweed pollen floating willy nilly here and there, a paroxysm of sneezing ensued. The human brain is a curious thing. We wonder sometimes how many of the people who prattle about 'science' ever really read 'Science and Health' and 'Key to the Scriptures,' understand the senseless jargon in which they are clothed, or know anything of the personal history of the woman, Mary Baker Eddy, who wrote them. As a child she was a cataleptic, subject to fits of hysteria, in which she fell screaming to the floor, and through the fear inspired ruled the household of her father, Mark Baker, a New England farmer. 'Mary Magdalene had seven devils,' he once declared, 'but our Mary has fourteen.' She gave away her own son when he was seven years old and saw him no more until he was 34. All her life she was an intriguer and trouble-maker, and one by one had to leave the homes that had given her domicile, being even denied shelter by her own sister, Mrs. Titlton. She was illiterate, self-centered, but shrewd. 'Science and Health' was filched almost bodily from Quimby, the Portland clockmaker and faith healer, whose pupil she became after an unsuccessful sortie into spiritualism, and to the end she was a victim of the grossest superstition. Her dominating fear was of 'malicious animal magnetism,' and she even refused to let her mail go through the Boston postoffice, declaring it had been 'poisoned' against her. And yet millions follow this, the greatest meglomaniac of all time, and ascribe to her even the attributes of deity. The brain of the race has cracked."